

The (SOF) Truth About ARSOF Logistics Transformation

**A Monograph
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Abstract

The (SOF) Truth About ARSOF Logistics Transformation by MAJ Jason M. Alvis, USA, 41 pages.

United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) transformation included significant changes and additions to the support units assigned to ARSOF.

Amidst all of the structural and personnel additions and changes, ARSOF cannot completely transform without considering the human dimension. The human dimension is important because ARSOF missions cover the spectrum of conflict and right individual is necessary to understand and logistically support the diverse capabilities of ARSOF.

One way to consider the human dimension is through the Special Operations Forces (SOF) Truths. The SOF Truths can be applied to the tenets of the Army's approved change analysis construct, DOTMLPF (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities). Doctrine, training, leadership and personnel are the most important tenets of the DOTMLPF for ARSOF logistics transformation. The U.S. Army and the Department of Defense have necessary courses and curricula that can be tailored to maximize the ARSOF logistician's training and leadership potential with minimal cost to the Army or ARSOF units. Consistent analysis of doctrine by ARSOF, focused training curriculum and courses for the ARSOF logistician, and the selection of leaders and personnel that volunteered or were specifically recruited by ARSOF are the way to best consider the human dimension, fulfill the SOF Truths and complete ARSOF logistics transformation.

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Introduction

Providing logistics support to Special Operations Forces (SOF) has been a creative challenge since the advent of SOF in World War II. Whether dropping cargo bundles into Yugoslavia for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS),¹ utilizing mules and elephants for resupply trains by the Chindits and Merrill's Marauders in Burma,² or collaborating with host-nation personnel and transport systems in Afghanistan to multiple and dispersed operational detachment – alpha (ODA) firebases,³ logisticians have a history of employing imaginative techniques in support of special operations forces. Historically, the largest support elements in Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) existed after major conflicts. At the end of the Vietnam War, Special Forces Groups were sustained with organic support battalions. From the end of Vietnam through Desert Storm the logistics requirements decreased and Special Forces Groups were supported by only a service company and a signal company. In 1990, each Special Forces Battalion had its own support company, along with the Group Support Companies. After Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) activated the Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM). The SOSCOM provided logistics support to Special Forces at each level of conflict: at the tactical level by deploying troops from the 528th Support Battalion to support Special Forces groups, battalions or companies, and at the operational and lower strategic level by coordinating and liaising with conventional army support entities through the Special Operations Theater Support Element (SOTSE) (now called the Army Special Operations Liaison Element {ALE}).

¹ Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 47

² MAJ Scott R. McMichaels, "A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry" *Combat Studies Institute Research Survey* 6 (1987): 30-33 "...while this great battle was being contested, another war, smaller in scale but no less fierce, was being fought 200 miles in the Japanese rear. Here, over 20,000 specially trained jungle soldiers attempted to weaken the Japanese Army by delivering a knockout blow to its unprotected "guts." Three thousand of these troops were American volunteers, officially known as the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) and popularly known as "Merrill's Marauders" (although they referred to themselves as "Galahad"). The other larger part of this extraordinary collection of fighting men was the Chindits, also known as the Special Force."

³ 1LT Christopher Manganaro, "Doing More with Less: Special Force Logistics in Afghanistan" *Army Logistician*, November - December 2007, 28

The most recent change in support to ARSOF came in 2005 with the addition of a Group Support Battalion (GSB) to each Special Forces Group, a support company to each Ranger Battalion, the Ranger Support Operations Detachment to the 75th Ranger Regiment headquarters; and the expansion of the 528th Support Battalion to the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne), which attained full operational capability on 16 December 2008.

United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is one of four Combatant Commands in the Department of Defense (DoD) that is not geographically oriented. It is also the smallest combatant command; yet shoulders an enormous responsibility within the DoD as the synchronizing agent for the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT). Within this small command, Army Special Operations Forces are the largest element. The efforts and actions of ARSOF are therefore widely visible within USSOCOM and the DoD. Furthermore, Army Special Forces (SF) is the largest entity within ARSOF.

The entire United States military, and specifically the Army, is in the midst of the most radical transformation since World War II. The visibility described above indirectly creates a “directed telescope” on the process, proficiency and effectiveness of ARSOF logistics transformation. Special Forces are undergoing the largest iteration of ARSOF logistics transformation and are the focal point of the analysis contained within this monograph. ARSOF intended for their transformed logistics structures to enable expeditionary ARSOF missions. ARSOF logistics doctrine states, “ARSOF logistics units enable ARSOF missions by ensuring that operational-level logistics conditions are set, through detailed planning, before deployment.”⁴ USASOC’s 528th SB was created with a focus on operational level logistics planning and synchronization (versus the tactical distribution focus of Army sustainment brigades). Amid the attention at even the highest levels, gaps between conventional and ARSOF logistics linger and shortfalls exist, specifically in training, leadership and personnel.

⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, page 1-1

Army Special Operations Forces are transforming in pace with the conventional Army, including its logistics structures and how it is supported on the battlefield. Recently published Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) logistics doctrine describes the impetus for transformation:

The Army transformation process produced significant changes to the entire theater logistics structure that ARSOF relied on for sustainment. These changes impacted virtually every process from theater opening to the tactical distribution of supplies. The United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) reviewed the ARSOF logistical structures and requirements in concert with the Army's modular expeditionary formations. This review required that USASOC reorganize to enable expeditionary ARSOF operations with a logistical force structure designed to interface with the modular Army logistics structures.⁵

It is important to take a structured and organized approach to transformation and to remain holistically mindful of all the changes and how they impact each other. In interviews and written communication on this topic, multiple logistics officers stressed the need to focus on capabilities and requirements; systematic terms and processes; and understanding of how the unit being transformed operates when it is deployed.⁶ Each mission conducted by ARSOF has implications across the range of military operations:

[The] Use of ARSOF capabilities in military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence activities helps shape the operational environment and keep the day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict while maintaining U.S. global influence. Many of the missions associated with lesser contingencies, such as logistics support and foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA), do not require combat.⁷

Much like ARSOF missions span the range of military operations, logistics transformation also influences the entire Army. ARSOF must maintain its interest and progress in transformation, as ARSOF units now

⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, 1-1

⁶ Matthew Fuhrer. 2009. Interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. January 09; Geoffrey DeTingo, 2009. Telephone interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. February 09; LTC Francis Flynn, e-mail to message to Jason Alvis, 15 January 2009.

⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces*, 1-2

have logistics support in their modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) authorizations.⁸ Additionally, the increase in the ARSOF logistics MTOEs means that more logistics personnel from the conventional Army will serve in ARSOF logistics positions. The Futures Concept published by the United States Army's Training and Doctrine Command in 2005 anticipates a myriad of joint logistics networks and processes. ARSOF logistics must be linked into those systems and evolve as those systems evolve. It is therefore advantageous to maintain and foster the link throughout the Army transformation process instead of reacting after conventional forces have updated and transformed.

Critics have stated that ARSOF logistics is “fully ten years behind the Army” and that “the conventional Army gets logistics transformations right,⁹” implying that ARSOF logistics transformation does not. The perceived slow pace of ARSOF logistics transformation is explained in FM 3-05.140. “USASOC’s logistics transformation was conducted with very little personnel growth; therefore, ARSOF logistics formations are lean and are unable to provide all logistics and sustainment required to support ARSOF missions.”¹⁰ Where some perceive transformation gone wrong, others see the opportunity to capitalize on the human dimension. The limited personnel growth and highly diverse nature of the mission necessitates that ARSOF logistics, even after transforming, requires personnel with the capability to maximize limited resources and network across the military for logistics support success. Currently, United States Special Forces Command (USASFC) is on their 5th “band” of transformation. Understanding the iterative process of transformation is important for a holistic analysis. The right person with unique training and skills and personality is required to operate within these transformational bands,

⁸ An MTOE is a description, in both narrative and table form, as applicable, of the administrative and organizational make-up of any unit in the Army.

⁹ U.S. Congress. Senate. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities. *Special Operations Forces: Challenges and Opportunities*, March 3, 2008.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009

simultaneously provide support to Special Forces and ultimately synchronize the continuous Special Forces support mission with ongoing ARSOF operations.

With more logistics personnel being assigned to lower levels of ARSOF units, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) must focus on the Human dimension of its non-SOF personnel in order to most effectively manage emerging changes and complicated logistics challenges that accompany the military's complex problem in unconventional warfare in the Contemporary Operating Environment.

Special Operations Forces possess the right personalities, specific characteristics and unique capabilities, often referred to as the human dimension, for addressing the complex problems that the military faces, including unconventional warfare. ARSOF builds its force guided by the SOF Truths. The SOF Truths are: *Humans are more important than hardware. Quality is better than quantity. SOF cannot be mass produced. SOF cannot be created after a crisis occurs.*¹¹ The SOF Truths focus on the Human dimension and guide how ARSOF units are built and trained. Admiral Eric T. Olson, commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), testified to Congress in March 2008 about the need for the proper equipping and enabling of SOF by conventional forces,

“These priorities support USSOCOM’s ongoing efforts to ensure SOF are highly trained, **properly equipped** and deployed to the right places at the right times for the right missions. Our personnel must be capable of planning and leading a wide range of lethal and non-lethal special operations missions in complex, ambiguous environments. This specific requirement underpins expectations that SOF will continue a military culture of initiative and innovation at every level. USSOCOM will continue to work closely with the services to ensure that **the conventional force enablers** upon which we depend remain a part of our future operations”¹²

His comments imply to all SOF leaders and commanders the need to integrate conventional force enablers in light of the SOF Truths; and for conventional force leaders and commanders that provide enablers to

¹¹ United States Army Special Operations Command. *Army Special Operations Forces Truths*. <http://www.soc.mil/sofinfo/truths.html> [accessed 07 October 2008]

¹² Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture of Special Operations Forces*, March 4, 2008, 4

SOF to understand the SOF Truths and provide support as such. It is important to build and train ARSOF logistics personnel and officers in particular, with the same focus on the SOF Truths and the Human dimension. Currently, logisticians assigned to ARSOF are not. The SOF Truths must be applied to ARSOF logisticians in order to provide the support that ARSOF requires.

This monograph analyzes ARSOF logistics transformation against doctrine, organization, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF)¹³, describes the need to consider the human dimension through the SOF Truths in further Special Forces logistics transformation, and depicts which tenets of DOTMLPF must be focused on and nested with the SOF Truths in order to maximize the contributions of the ARSOF logistician. Although there are recommendations in each section of the DOTMLPF analysis, the purpose of this paper is to highlight what needs to be done regarding Special Forces logistics personnel. However, the paper does not recommend a detailed actions or methodologies. Instead, it highlights where systems within ARSOF and the Army are already established and where systems are currently lacking, require improvement, or could be established with very little cost to the ARSOF or the Army.

¹³ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 1, *The Army*, June 2005, 4-11.

DOTMLPF and the SOF Truths

The Department of Defense (DoD) utilizes the DOTMLPF (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities) construct as a frame to analyze the thoroughness of a solution or problem requiring a solution.¹⁴ DOTMLPF provides a defined start-point for the military's organizational and transformational problems. It is specifically defined in Army doctrine as:

“a problem-solving construct for assessing current capabilities and managing change. Change is achieved through a continuous cycle of adaptive innovation, experimentation, and experience. Change deliberately executed across DOTMLPF elements enables the Army to improve its capabilities to provide dominant landpower to the joint force.”¹⁵

Specific to the Army, DOTMLPF emerges in Army Field Manual One (FM -1) as the cornerstone for the basic analysis of the Army operational concept and the fundamentals that support it, as well as the construct to assess the current transformation of the Army's units and institutions “to enhance our campaign qualities for sustained operations and to achieve greater expeditionary and joint capabilities.”¹⁶ It is with the same desire to correctly institute and manage change that ARSOF logistics can be examined under the DOTMLPF construct in order to determine its adequacy. Although described as seven separate entities, the tenets of DOTMLPF do not stand alone and in fact interact within their application to the transforming unit. The following chart, taken from FM-1, displays the Army's consideration across the transformational spectrum in order to meet future joint force attributes.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) 3180.01, *Joint Requirements Oversight Council*, 31 OCT 2002, page B-1

¹⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 1, *The Army*,

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 1, *The Army*,

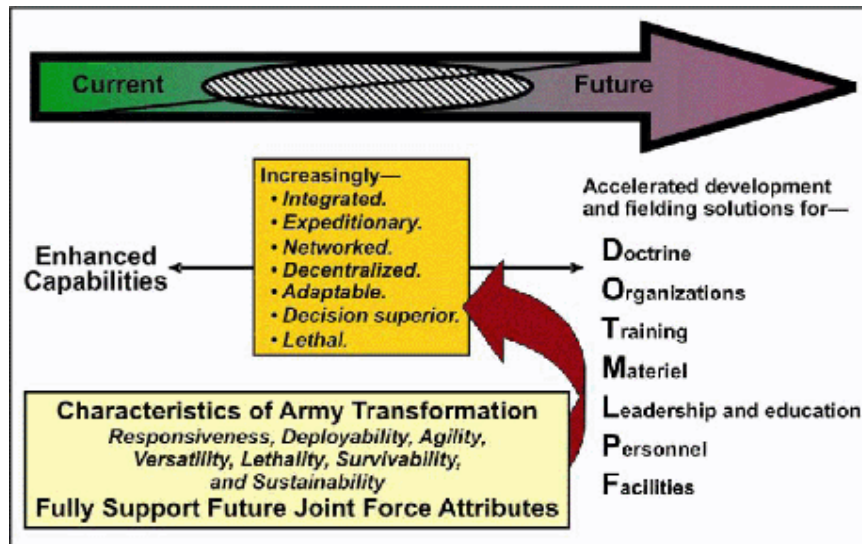


Figure 1

U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 1, *The Army*, Figure 1-1

Similarly, DOTMLPF can be used to assess the adequacy of ARSOF logistics transformation. The SOF Truths must be considered in conjunction with DOTMLPF to assess the human dimension of ARSOF logistics transformation.

The SOF Truths were instituted in 1987, around the same time Special Forces became a branch for Army Officers and the United States Special Operations Command was activated. Before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the GWOT, General Peter J. Schoomaker, (then) commander of United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) described the SOF Truths and their impact on ARSOF units. He articulated the uniqueness of SOF and the importance of selecting the proper individual. "You've got to select people with the highest likelihood of success. Then you've got to train, educate, and assess them constantly. You've got to keep upgrading the quality. We have a set of four 'SOF Truths': *Humans are more important than hardware. Quality is better than quantity. SOF cannot be mass produced. SOF cannot be created after a crisis occurs.* These truths guide how we think about building our force. They're simple, and we repeat them over and over, and we make it every commander's

responsibility to make sure that his people understand them."¹⁷ The best way to focus on the human dimension for non-SOF personnel is to apply the SOF Truths against them. Just as GEN Schoomaker remarked that the SOF Truths guide how SOF thinks about building its force, they should guide how logistics personnel are assigned to SOF units.

Although there are officially four SOF Truths, there were originally five. The fifth (or forgotten) truth was "Most Special Operations require non-SOF assistance."¹⁸ Colonel John M. Collins, the original author of the SOF Truths, recommends that the fifth SOF Truth should be restored, stating:

"That oversight was a serious mistake in my opinion, because its omission encourages unrealistic expectations by poorly tutored employers and perpetuates a counterproductive "us versus everybody else" attitude by excessively gung ho members of the SOF community."¹⁹

ARSOF logistics transformation seeks to reverse this oversight by building the capability to "deploy rapidly and early; collocate and habitually train with the supported unit; fill immediate and critical logistical requirements with organic formations; provide the capability to plug into theater logistics structures, therefore achieving required logistics staying power; tie the USASOC units to the operational theater support structure."²⁰

At the activation of USSOCOM in 1987, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William J. Crowe implored SOF to breakdown walls between SOF and conventional forces, and then

¹⁷ Eli Cohen and Noel Tichy; *Operation – Leadership*, Fast Company Magazine; Issue 27, August 1999, <http://www.fastcompany.com/node/37511/print>, (accessed 05 April 2009).

¹⁸ COL John M. Collins, *U.S. Special Operations – Personal Opinions*, Small Wars Journal, entry posted December 13, 2008, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/2008/12/us-special-operations-personal.php> (accessed December 23, 2008).

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, page 1-1.

educate the rest of the military and integrate SOF efforts into the rest of the military.²¹ Likewise, continual analysis of ARSOF logistics structures and outputs will ensure that SOF is educated regarding the combat multiplication provided by its robust support system and that its new logistics units are integrated into ARSOF.

Doctrine

Doctrine should succinctly express the collective wisdom about how U.S. Armed Forces conduct military operations.²² Joint Publication 1-02 defines doctrine as the “Fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.”²³ In February 2009, the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) Directorate of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) published Field Manual (FM) 3.5-140 “*Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*.” While the draft FM (or FMI²⁴) was distributed among some current SOF logisticians for comments, it was not disseminated across the entire force. The first time the author of this monograph saw Field Manual Interim (FMI) 3.5-140 was in October 2008. Due to the small size of the ARSOF logistics community, all personnel, at least the rank of major and above, could realistically provide input to ARSOF logistics doctrine. As the community grows, managing this process will become more difficult. A more precise example of the limited distribution during the doctrine’s formation involves two former Group Support

²¹ U.S. Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, I-I, “First, break down the wall that has more or less come between special operations forces and the other parts of our military, the wall that some people will try to build higher. Second, educate the rest of the military – spread a recognition and understanding of what you do, why you do it and how important it is that you do it. Last, integrate your efforts into the full spectrum of our military capabilities.”

²² Doctrine for Asymmetric Warfare, http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume1/october_2003/10_03_1.html, (accessed 01 FEB 09).

²³ United States Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 171.

²⁴ FMI is Field Manual Interim and is the draft form of any military document while it is in circulation throughout the service for input, accuracy assessment and corrections. FMI 3.5-140 had an effective date of February 2007.

Battalion (GSB) Commanders. The first time that Lieutenant Colonels (Retired) Matt Fuhrer and Todd Guggisberg saw the document was in January 2009, only one month before the document was published in its final form. Fuhrer and Guggisberg currently teach conventional and SOF logistics for the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations (DLRO) at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC). As two of the first GSB commanders, their ground-breaking experience and germane knowledge could have easily been solicited for accuracy and input into the field manual. Additionally, they have direct access through the CGSC to the largest gathering of future leaders and staff officers in these new organizations. Personnel with experience and positions such as theirs should be leveraged to influence doctrine in the formation or revision processes as well as in the distribution and instruction of doctrine at the Army's educational institutions. According to the author of FM 3-05.140, the FM will be reviewed in 2011, which aligns with the current doctrinal review schedules.²⁵ At FMI 3.05-140's initial publication in February 2007, the community of ARSOF logisticians was fairly small and accessible. The collective knowledge and combat proven experiences of the new ARSOF logisticians may have aided the doctrine production process. DOT-D missed an opportunity to fully canvas ARSOF logisticians and allow them to assist in the development of this critical doctrine. Although sufficient, FM 3-05.140 may lack precise authority and judgment because of this oversight.

Shortcomings in the doctrine development process aside, FM 3.5-140 reinforces the Army's sustainment principles that affect the remainder of the DOTMLPF analysis. Those principles are: anticipation, responsiveness, simplicity, economy, survivability, continuity, improvisation and integration.²⁶ In addition to the Army's sustainment principles, ARSOF logistics has Expeditionary

²⁵ Mr. Larry Townsend (doctrine writer), USAJFKSWCS DOT-D, e-mail message to Jason Alvis, 10 January 2009.

²⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009. The principles of sustainment are critical to guiding the success of generating combat power, strategic and operational reach, and endurance. These principles are anticipation, responsiveness, simplicity, economy, survivability, continuity, improvisation, and integration. Sustaining SO missions throughout any operation

Logistics Imperatives, which are exclusive to ARSOF logistics. They are: understanding the operational environment, unity of effort, rapid and precise response, and domain-wide visibility. “Although the imperatives may not apply to all types of SOF requirements, ARSOF commanders must include the applicable imperatives in their mission planning and execution, especially when developing the concept of support.”²⁷ These imperatives and the understanding therein, are what separate ARSOF logistics doctrine from Army doctrine and necessitates the ARSOF logistician to have a broad understanding of logistics and the SOF Truths.

FM 3-5.140 would also be a good stepping off point for the development of Joint SOF logistics doctrine. Joint Publication 3-05, *Joint Special Operations*, states, “[Special Operations] SO are inherently joint. Although they may be conducted as a single-Service operation, most are planned and executed as a joint operation. SO routinely require joint support and coordination.”²⁸ Because ARSOF is the largest component within United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and because special operations are inherently joint, ARSOF has an inherent burden and responsibility to lead the way in innovation within the DOTMLPF construct. Currently, the only references to SOF Logistics doctrine in joint operations are in chapter four of Joint Publication 3.05, *Joint Special Operations*, and Joint Publication 4.0, *Joint Logistics*; and each text says to refer to the other. Although there will always be service peculiarities and Title-10 responsibilities (already identified in both aforementioned joint

or event is important to success. Tailored SOF packages maximize the capability of initial-entry forces consistent with the mission and the requirement to project, employ, and sustain the force. ARSOF sustainment planners must work hand in hand with SOF operational planners to synchronize sustainment to enable operational reach. Endurance is the ability to employ combat power anywhere for protracted periods. Endurance stems from the ability to generate, protect, and sustain a force, regardless of how far away it is deployed, how austere the environment, or how long land power is required. Providing sustainment to support operations consistent with the commanders’ intent and requirements is critical to ARSOF projection and success.

²⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, 1-11.

²⁸ U.S. Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, December 2003, I-2.

publications), ARSOF's extensive ground work in SOF logistics transformation, prescribed in FM 3-5.140 and operationalized in Operations IRAQI and ENDURING FREEDOM, codifies the essence of support to SOF and is a solid start point for developing joint SOF logistics doctrine.

The 2006 Army Modernization Plan states that doctrine "touches every aspect of the Army."²⁹ Because doctrine has such an impacting influence, it is critical to ensure ARSOF logistics doctrine is written, assessed and revised by the most qualified personnel, namely those who are currently serving or who have recently served in ARSOF logistics positions. Allowing doctrine and FM 3-05.140 specifically, widest dissemination across ARSOF logistics personnel demonstrates the inclusion of the ARSOF logisticians as a portion of the Human dimension within the SOF Truths.

Organization

From 2000 to 2009, and specifically since 2005, the Army has undergone its most comprehensive transformation and modernization since World War II. Specifically, the focus of the Army's formation and movement shifted from Corps and Divisions to a "Brigade Centric" Army. The Army Modernization Plan, published in 2006, states, "The centerpiece of the modular Army is the Brigade Combat Team (BCT)...all of which are currently being reorganized, equipped and deployed."³⁰ In executing this transformation, the conventional Army redesigned and re-designated its logistics focus and manpower at the battalion level. USASOC transformed its ARSOF logistics organizations and activities in concert with the U.S. Army's concept of modularity and force projection.³¹ FM 3-05.140 states,

²⁹ United States Army G8-FD, *Army Modernization Plan 2006, Annex A*, www.army.mil [accessed 14 March 2009], A-1.

³⁰ United States Army G8-FD, *Army Modernization Plan 2006, Annex A*, www.army.mil [accessed 14 March 2009], A-4

³¹ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, 1-4.

“ARSOF logistics must habitually train with the units it supports, collocate with those supported units, plug into theater logistics structures and tie USASOC to operational theater support.”³²

The conventional Army is currently transforming from logistics based on stock-piles and static supply points to distribution-based logistics. A way of articulating the essence of distribution based logistics is to call it “sense and respond logistics,” thereby maximizing velocity (the rate and amount of distribution over time) capacities organic to operational units, flexibly basing supplies and ultimately increasing the speed and quality of logistics on the insurgent battlefield, with no boundaries and very unpredictable demands.³³ Essentially, the conventional Army has positioned its support assets and personnel closer to the combat units in an attempt to shorten sustainment processes at the fighting end of the “spear.” ARSOF logistics fully supports this concept as well. FM 3-05.140 further states, “Direct throughput from the national provider to the theater’s sustainment to the lowest ARSOF unit operationally supportable is a goal of distribution-based logistics.”³⁴ The current Army template for logistics and sustainment stipulates a support battalion in every combat brigade; and a sustainment brigade for every combat division as well as multiple separate brigades that do not task-organize under divisional unit structures. To place this into context, a Regiment, a Special Forces or Psychological Operations Group and a Brigade are all on the same level of command, commanded by a colonel. The naming distinction of whether to call a specific unit commanded by a colonel a Regiment, Group or Brigade lies primarily in history and tradition, and only partially in functionality and location of subordinate units.

³² U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, 1-1.

³³ Michael F. Hammond, “Sense and Respond: Military Logistics in a Global Security Environment, Army Logistician, Sept/Oct 08, 6-9.

³⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, 4-3.

The conventional Army sustainment brigade is no longer tied to a specific division as the supporter. This allows for flexibility upon multiple, yet separate deployments for units stationed at the same location, but deploying on separate timelines. The 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne) is a “one-of-a-kind Sustainment Brigade...with the mission to set the operational level logistics conditions to enable ARSOF operations.”³⁵ Because the conventional Army no longer has a direct support unit link at the brigade level, the crux and impetus for distribution-based logistics support to combat forces is at the support battalion level. In ARSOF, the only support battalions are found in the Special Forces Groups, thus the focus of the organizational analysis will be the Special Forces Group and its organic Group Support Battalion (GSB).

Just as doctrine requires judgment in its application, organizing logistics under the GSB construct requires judgment to integrate the commander’s intent, the needs of the unit and the personality of the personnel assigned to the GSB. Each Special Forces Group is geographically focused with regional alignments throughout the world. Those alignments coincide with each geographic combatant commander’s area of responsibility. Each Special Forces Group’s missions are different, and the regions they serve in have varied and diverse requirements as well. The make-up of the GSBs must be flexible to meet these demands. One example is the difference between the 7th GSB and the 10th GSB. 7th SFG (A) is regionally focused within Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and primarily operates in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan. 10th SFG (A) is regionally focused within European Command (EUCOM) and operates in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The regional orientations and the contingency theaters that the two groups operate within vary drastically in regards to geography, terrain, culture and accessibility. Specific personnel positions within these two organizations differ drastically, too. Regardless of how the personnel are arrayed across their respective requirements, a shortfall exists primarily in the number of people assigned. The GSB in its current state is simply not organized to

³⁵ 528th SB (A) Information Paper, 20 JAN 09.

sustain the Special Forces Group by itself. While it may have “plenty” of assets on paper, the distribution of those assets is another story. For example, most Special Forces Groups now have unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) sections with three UAVs per section. At first glance, this makes sense. There are three battalions and three UAVs, so one UAV is apportioned to each battalion. Further analysis reveals that although there are three UAVs, there is only one launcher and only one mechanic dedicated to maintaining the three UAVs. When a Special Forces Group is scattered across 500 miles of an area of operations (AO), or is simultaneously conducting operations in multiple countries, the division of the GSB’s assets becomes problematic. The same is true of other GSB assets that initially divide nicely by the number of battalions requiring support. The math reveals a delta and is further complicated by the ongoing expansion of each Special Forces Group by a battalion.³⁶ Unless the MTOE of the GSB increases to reflect these additions, the capability of a GSB to support a SFG will decrease at the same time that the personnel in the GSBs will see their operations tempo increased. Neither option is palatable in the COE. Again, constant assessment of the GSBs capabilities will ensure the organization is prepared to support its Special Forces Group.

As transformation began, current and former logisticians assigned to ARSOF touted the benefits of the logistics capability to Special Forces. Eduardo Santiago and William Johnson, US Army logisticians who have served in ARSOF describe the benefits of the GSB.

“The obvious advantage is that each group can be independently employed without major augmentation. The new organizational structure also provides Special Operations forces with organic logistics sustainment.

- Can deploy rapidly to fill critical logistics requirements.
- Ties into the existing theater support structure.
- Establishes and collocates with habitual support and training relationships.
- Provides logistics management and planning capabilities.
- Can self-sustain at the group level under new modularity doctrine.

³⁶ Sean Naylor, “Special Forces Expands” *Army Times*, August 11, 2008, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/08/army_specialforces_080908w/ [accessed on March 17, 2009].

When theater Army combat service support is unavailable, the GSB is the primary common-user logistics provider for deployed Special Operations forces. Its mission is to plan, coordinate, synchronize, and control combat support and combat service support of the Special Forces group. It sends requirements to the Army Special Operations liaison element and reaches back to the Special Operations sustainment brigade as necessary.”³⁷

Although GSBs provide the benefits listed above, managing a GSB can be problematic. LTC (R) Matt Fuhrer, the first commander of the 10th GSB (A) at Fort Carson, Colorado commented in an interview with the author regarding his GSB that he had the latitude to “make his GSB work.” As long as he met the Group Commander’s intent and the special operators were supported, there were no issues with how his job was performed. He cautioned, though, that the GSB should not be considered the answer to all ARSOF logistics needs. “It was actually a zero sum gain” Fuhrer commented, referring to the initial transformation and standing up of the GSBs and the initial no-growth order.³⁸ The MTOE for a GSB changed four times in three years, and is again under review for a further change and increase in personnel. The gain will come with growth of the GSBs, and that growth has already started. Regardless of differences in unit mission or geographic focus area, each GSB’s resident capabilities must be divisible by four (to account for the next addition of the fourth SF battalion in each group; and the medical capability at the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) level must increase.³⁹

The most recent assessment of the structure of ARSOF logistics was a published Congressional testimony to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities in March 2009. In his testimony, newly retired Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel Roger Carstens criticized many shortcomings in the structure of ARSOF logistics units, particularly the GSBs

³⁷ Santiago, Eduardo and Johnson, William C. Jr., “Transformation of Logistics Support of Special Forces” *Army Logistician*, Sept-Oct, 2006, 32-34.

³⁸ Matthew Fuhrer, 2009. Interview by the Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. January 09.

³⁹ *Band V Growth Charts*, USASOC PowerPoint Briefing, 13 February 2009, slide 4.

and the 75th Ranger Regiment's maintenance capabilities for their recently added Stryker combat vehicles.⁴⁰ However, his research failed to incorporate the February 2009 guidance from the United States Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) commander, BG Michael Repass, which stipulated a resident logistics capability divisible by four, and the activation of Forward Support Companies. Fully implementing this stipulation will take some time, as the Army as a whole does not have enough logistics personnel to fill all of its positions. Until there are enough personnel to fill each position, creative leaders and personnel in ARSOF logistics units are expected to span the gap, meet the units' logistics needs, and fulfill the SOF Truths that *Humans are more important than hardware* and *Most special operations require non-SOF support*. This is another obvious indication that having the right personnel in those positions is vital for success. By employing competent logisticians and providing a baseline of personnel, each GSB will be able to adequately support through force-tailoring and sense and respond logistics.

Training

The fourth SOF Truth states “*Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.*” This SOF Truth must be transposed to the logistician supporting SOF as well because an ARSOF logistician must be qualified to provide a SOF commander with tailored and critical sustainment. One field grade officer assigned to the Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) ALE position in 2008 as his first SOF assignment arrived with no specialty training whatsoever, and experienced an incredibly steep learning curve despite years of conventional logistics experience. His only qualification was completing airborne school at the age of 40. His assignment process is discussed in the leadership portion of the monograph, but in an e-mail to the author, he made several recommendations for training that a logistician should receive in order to adequately support the SOF. His recommendations spanned the gamut of logistics oriented courses, including the Joint Special

⁴⁰ U.S. Congress. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities. *Special Operations Forces: Challenges and Opportunities*, March 3, 2008.

Operations Staff Officer's Course, Joint Special Operations Advanced Planning Applications Course, Joint Special Operations Collaborative Planning Course, Special Operations Forces Interagency Collaboration Course, and the Special Operations Support Team Orientation Course offered by Joint Special Operations University; the Joint Operations Planning and Execution System (JOPES) offered by the Joint Deployment Training Center Among, and the Contracting Officer Representative Course from the Army Logistics Management College were all on the list. He emphasized the importance of the education by stating, "To some, this training may seem excessive...but honestly we get into a lot of support that is beyond what our mission says on paper. Just the nature of the beast."⁴¹ While some of those courses are available for logisticians serving in a variety of positions, they are qualifications not often possessed by specific individuals. The breadth of knowledge required to adequately support ARSOF necessitates in-depth training.

Fuhrer's experience is an alternate example. Having spent 15 of his 20 years in the Army supporting special operations in one capacity or another, he articulated the requirement for his leaders and Soldiers alike to know their job and two others. Building redundancy through unit level training and maximizing training offered outside the organization is essential for the success of the GSB.⁴² These statements reveal the essence of the problem. More is required of SOF logisticians than conventional logisticians. The ability to operate with more latitude and leverage both conventional systems and SOF peculiar capabilities requires the right individual, trained specifically for the broad and ambiguous duties of an ARSOF logistician.

LTC Francis Flynn, current Deputy Commander of the 528th SB (A), stated,

"The biggest requirement for Logisticians in a SOF Unit is to understand how that unit operates when it is employed. Then that same logistician needs to

⁴¹ MAJ Bret Glowth, e-mail message to Jason Alvis, 10 January 2009.

⁴² Matthew Fuhrer. 2009. Interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. January 09.

understand executive agent and service responsibilities that are normally delineated in USC [United States Code]. The tyranny of distance is the biggest obstacle that logistician needs to overcome.”⁴³

In understanding how a certain unit deploys and overcomes the tyranny of distance, tailoring the organization becomes a key component in sustaining SOF through the long war. One component of understanding the external factors influencing ARSOF logistics through executive agent and service responsibilities is much of the training by various DoD and Army institutions. The Army and the joint community have the training and schools necessary to meet the unique demands of ARSOF logisticians. A program or pipeline should be constructed in order to more holistically train ARSOF logisticians.

The average Special Forces Officer initially spends upwards of two years in training before arriving to a unit. This process honors the third SOF Truth; *Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced*. There is no such training pipeline for ARSOF logisticians. In regards to training, the same amount of time should be spent on the Special Forces logistician, maximizing education and training for the ultimate benefit of the unit. There are a plethora of requirements specific to supporting ARSOF even with their lean force structure. ARSOF will be more thoroughly supported and will “fill immediate and critical logistics requirements with organic formations⁴⁴” by training their logisticians specifically for their very broad mission. Time and investment in the Human dimension of ARSOF logisticians would support all five SOF Truths. Logistics officers currently have two means by which to identify themselves as possessing additional training or specialty skills. One is the Skill Identifier (SI) and the other is the Area of Concentration (AOC). SIs identify specialized occupational areas which are required to perform the duties of a special position. The AOC is specific to the logistics branch, as no other branch of the Army has AOCs listed in DA PAM 600-3. Both the SI and AOC require certain levels of training and experience in order to attain the identifier. The identifiers benefit both the officer and the Army. The

⁴³ LTC Francis Flynn, e-mail message to Jason Alvis, February 02, 2009.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, page 1-1.

officer benefits by increasing his or her professional training and experience. The Army benefits from officers possessing SIs and AOCs because they form a tracking mechanism for individuals with specific skills and capabilities for peculiar requirements. Adding the AOC or SI for a SOF Logistician would offer similar benefits to the individual as well as the Army. Officially establishing AOCs or SIs takes a significant amount of time to propose and gain approval through Headquarters, Department of the Army.

One way that ARSOF could educate and train its logisticians, even if AOCs or SIs never materialize, is through the Army's officer professional military education (OPME). Every major in the United States Army (along with select officers from other services and partner nations) attends Intermediate Level Education (ILE) at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College (USACGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The curriculum is divided into three major sections, spanning a ten month time period, with common core sessions in leadership and history woven throughout. Students choose electives in the third section of ILE. SOF Studies is a choice for the elective period, geared primarily for SOF operators in all services.⁴⁵ The SOF Studies cadre allows logisticians and other enablers to attend the SOF Studies electives, particularly if the logistician knows his or her follow-on assignment will be with SOF. Further developing the SOF Studies curriculum with the addition of SOF logistics, and leveraging the ARSOF logistics knowledge from the DLRO instructors would prepare the logistician for an assignment with ARSOF and would fill potential requirements for creating a future AOC or SI. Additionally, establishing an ARSOF logistics course at the Army Logistics Management College (ALMC) where company grade logistics officers attend their Captains' Career Course would better prepare future Special Forces and Ranger Forward Support Company commanders for their unique combination of conventional logistics systems and SOF-unique requirements and expectations. The capabilities and requisite knowledge and instructors are already at CGSC. Adjustments or minimal

⁴⁵ LTCs James Spence and Cassey Lessard, *Special Warfare* "Opportunities for ARSOF Education at Fort Leavenworth," January – February 2009, 10-13.

additions to the curriculum would be the only cost to the Army to train its ARSOF logisticians more thoroughly.

If an SI or AOC is established, the future requirements and program of instruction for the training pipeline would already have a template ready to be instituted. These training enhancements at both the Army educational levels and the unit level for ARSOF logisticians will greatly enhance the capabilities of the GSBs and maximize the quality of support to ARSOF, ever mindful of the SOF Truths. Meeting SOF-unique requirements and maximizing parallel acquisition and funding means are further analyzed in the next section on Materiel.

Materiel

Materiel is one element of the DOTMLPF that ARSOF planners can affect immediately. Unfortunately, as ARSOF transformation has mirrored the conventional Army transformation, so has their procurement model. Multiple Congressional Research Service reports from 2001 until the present have highlighted the need for more equipment to SOF. Those same reports indicated that even special operations have favored large projects over smaller and more immediate projects that would positively and quickly impact the force. ARSOF has the capability to stretch its defense dollars, however, by leveraging Title 10 funding for Base Operations Support issues and Major Force Program – 11 (MFP-11) funding for Special Operations peculiar equipment or needs.⁴⁶ These two funding tracks are not unlimited. In fact, USSOCOM's budget was only 6.7% of the DoD's budget proposal for 2006. Understanding these different, yet parallel funding processes to acquire materiel for ARSOF requires unique knowledge and training not common to a traditionally trained logistician.

⁴⁶ Headquarters, United States Special Operations Command, briefing to Army Society of Military Comptrollers, slide 8 and 10. MFP-11 funding is money set aside by Office of the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations (SO) Peculiar equipment and programs. "SO-PECULIAR - Equipment, material, supplies, and services required for special operations mission support for which there is no broad conventional force requirement."

The bulk of materiel requirements for Special Forces Groups reside within the GSBs. One example is the requirement for more UAVs per unit. Other examples of materiel needed are water purification systems, aerial delivery systems and maintenance contact trucks for even non-standard items like the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle. Most MRAPs fielded to either theater of operation come with a maintenance contract.⁴⁷ The maintenance and service contractors are usually located at a large, built-up base and work on the vehicles only after they return from operations. This arrangement does not work for many ARSOF MRAP operators who live further than the contractor is allowed to travel to perform routine maintenance, much less repair battle damage and conduct major assembly replacements. The author recalls a dialogue among some Special Forces officers during the SOF Studies Program at CGCS where one commented, “I had the ‘hangar queen’ Land Rover in my Advanced Operating Base (AOB). I had to keep the guys rolling, so the truck that was messed up the worst became the donor for all the others so that we could roll out the gate.”⁴⁸ Obviously other factors, such as distance from anything else resembling the U.S. Army, contributed to the hangar queen scenario. But in order to sustain ARSOF for the long war, USSOCOM must have a plan to meet these requirements. As previously mentioned, each Special Forces Group is regionally oriented, while the 528th SB (A) is globally oriented. The materiel issue is not with the 528th, but with the GSB and the Special Forces Groups they support. With a regional orientation, each Special Forces Group has unique requirements. In Afghanistan, for example, resupply is the primarily conducted by air. The two Special Forces Groups that conduct special operations on a rotating basis in Afghanistan will likely espouse the requirement for more riggers and aerial delivery rigging equipment due to the rough terrain and a primitive road network. This particular problem is currently solved by a legacy function and capability through Army Pre-positioned Stocks, Operational Project Stocks, Joint Operational Stocks warehouse,

⁴⁷ Matthew Fuhrer. 2009. Interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. January 09.

⁴⁸ LTC Jim Spence, Impromptu Discourse, (lecture, Special Operations Forces Studies class, US Army Command and General Staff College, April 2008).

and the Operational Needs Statements (ONS) process. Although managed primarily by civilians above the sustainment brigade level, these global warehouses provide SOF with enhanced capabilities for specific missions. Availability of stocks versus operational requirements is an obvious issue at today's operations tempo. Shortcomings from the warehouses are rectified through the operational needs statement (ONS) process. However, in order to expeditiously execute the ONS process, the contracting officer or logistician must know the process and the people, which require both training and experience. The transformation of ARSOF logistics in regards to materiel is sufficient and the capabilities inherent in parallel funding apparatuses should continually be leveraged by uniquely trained and skilled personnel. However, an untrained ARSOF logistician can impede operations by not knowing how to leverage the Materiel tenet of DOTMLPF and thus violating the first SOF Truth, *"Humans are more important than hardware."*

Leadership

A uniquely talented and trained individual is necessary to lead an organization dedicated to support Special Operations. In leadership, more than any other tenet of the DOTMLPF, the SOF Truths ring true for the sustainer as well as the operator. SOF Truths one and five (the forgotten truth) are the clearest examples: *"Humans are more important than hardware"* and *"Most Special Operations require support from non-SOF assistance."* While SOF requires non-SOF support, some SOF organizations tend to be very inward focused and protective of their domain rather than embracing non-SOF support. The transformation of ARSOF logistics pierced that protective bubble by adding the non-ARSOF trained support battalions to Special Force Groups and made some in the ARSOF community (justifiably) uncomfortable. Both former GSB commanders interviewed articulated that one requirement for the leadership of the GSBs is to prove the worth of both the GSBs and the GSB's leadership, and be value

added.⁴⁹ Leadership is the one area that the logistics and ARSOF communities can consistently, collectively and positively influence their organizations. The initial GSB commanders were hand selected by USASOC from among logisticians with experience in supporting SOF, yet subsequent officers were assigned to leadership and command positions in the GSBs by the Army's Human Resource Command battalion command slate and officer management system.⁵⁰ All of the SOF Truths are contradicted when the GSB Command assignment process for a leadership position within ARSOF is left to the standard HRC process because the HRC process does not take into account the SOF Truths or the Human dimension and therefore does not optimize the potential for assigning the most appropriate leaders to these unique units.

Becoming a Special Forces Officer takes a significant amount of time, training and assessment and is outlined in Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, Chapter 17, "*Characteristics required of Special Forces Officers*."⁵¹ Compare and contrast those attributes to the same pamphlet's description of a logistician, and the need for an increased or more stringent evaluation and selection criteria is evident. The requirements and functions of a Special Forces officer and a logistics officer have similarities; it cannot be denied that directly supporting Special Forces requires flexibility, creativity, and most of all, thorough knowledge of ARSOF modes of operation. Because of these requirements, it is imperative to focus on the human qualities of logistics leaders assigned to SOF.

Figure 2 compares and contrasts the attributes of a Special Forces officer and a Logistics officer and reveals the need for an increased evaluation and selection criteria for the Special Forces logistician.

⁴⁹ Todd Guggisberg and Matthew Fuhrer. 2009. Interviews by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. January 09.

⁵⁰ Force Sustainment Division of Army HRC Officer Personnel Management Directorate 600-3, 11b.

⁵¹ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 161.

Officer Characteristics Comparison

Special Forces

- Be physically fit.
- Possess unquestioned personal integrity and moral courage.
- Be self-reliant team players that can function as leaders in tightly knit small groups or independently.
- Possess the cognitive resilience and mental dexterity to act autonomously while under great stress
- Be able to inspire others to perform effectively in a highly stressful environment.
- Be an adaptive thinker, able to thrive in complex and ambiguous situations.
- Be mentally flexible and willing to experiment and innovate in a decentralized and unstructured environment.
- Have the ability to solve complex political-military problems and develop and employ conventional or unconventional solutions.
- Develop and employ non-doctrinal methods and techniques when applicable. Be capable of decisive action for missions in which no current doctrine exists.
- Be able to learn new skills, accept new ideas, and teach others.
- Possess good interpersonal and cross-cultural communications skills as well as political acumen and cultural sensitivity.

Logistics

- Be physically fit.
- Be self-reliant, proactive leaders.
- Be responsive and flexible.
- Have honed conceptual skills
- Possess Unique Skills (10 AOCs and one Skill Identifier)
- Operate with sound judgment
- Be Level headed under pressure
- Comfortable working with complex information technologies
- Be innovative
- Execute the proper balance between technical skills and the ability to understand and apply the appropriate tactical skills at the right moment
- Be comfortable working in fluid, nonlinear, noncontiguous environments with highly distributed forces functioning continually
- Seek innovative solutions, rapidly devise new procedures, or take extraordinary measures to adapt to the situation
- Be skilled in governance, statesmanship, and diplomacy.
- Be competent in their area of expertise

Figure 2

Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 161-162; 344-345.

While the logistics officer's characteristics listed in the chart above are nearly identical to the Special Forces officer characteristics, the time spent developing them are disparate. A directed and focused pipeline for the Special Forces logistician will provide the time and training necessary for the Special Forces logistician to be comparable in characteristics to the Special Forces officer, as indicated by doctrine. Of particular note, the last bullet in the Logistics Officer characteristics states that the logistician will be "competent in their area of expertise." The logistician possesses greater competence when the tenets of their area of expertise are delineated and honed.

In addition to the individual characteristics mentioned in DA-PAM 600-3, both ARSOF (FM 3-05) and ARSOF Logistics (FM 3-05.140) doctrine list expeditionary imperatives. In comparing these

imperatives, a greater depth of knowledge and competence in areas of expertise as well as ability to operate in ambiguous environments for the ARSOF logistician (compared to other logisticians) is readily apparent. Conventional Army doctrine does not include expeditionary logistics imperatives, or any logistics imperatives for that matter. The existence of ARSOF logistics imperatives necessitates knowledge beyond current Army logistics standards. The ARSOF logistician must know the ARSOF imperatives as well the ARSOF Logistics imperatives in order to provide the competent support from their areas of expertise as stated in DA PAM 600-3.

Imperatives Comparison	
<u>Special Forces</u>	<u>Logistics</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Operational Environment • Recognize Political Implications • Facilitate Interagency Activity • Engage the Threat Discriminately • Consider Long Term Effects • Ensure Legitimacy and Credibility of Special Operations • Anticipate and Control Psychological Effects • Apply Capabilities Indirectly • Develop Multiple Options • Ensure Long Term Sustainment • Provide Sufficient Intelligence • Balance Security and Synchronization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Operational Environment • Apply Unity of Effort • Ensure Rapid and Precise Response • Maintain Domain-wide visibility

Figure 3

U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3.05, *Army Special Operations Forces*, September 2006, 1-13

U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3.05-140, *Army Special Operations Forces Logistics*, February 2009, 1-11

The difference between the characteristics of the ARSOF officer as well as the ARSOF imperatives and the logistics imperatives is the time and training invested into the leader. Special Forces officers are developed over a longer period of time, through more thorough training and experience. Logistics officers assigned or on orders to ARSOF should have more thorough training as well because *Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced.*

During his or her assignment at CGSC at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, each major in the Army is afforded the opportunity to interview for his or her next assignment. Unit leaders travel to Ft. Leavenworth to meet and assess prospective officers to serve on their staffs and command their units. That opportunity is not the same for logisticians coming from or going to the Special Forces community. It would seem, with the emphasis and importance and growth experienced in ARSOF logistics through transformation that a logistics representative from USASFC, or at a minimum the 528th SB (A), would conduct interviews at CGSC to gain an individual understanding of the collective pool of volunteers willing and qualified to serve in the GSBs or the 528th SB (A). Currently the deputy commander of the 528th SB (A) acts as the defacto G-1 for all logisticians being assigned to USASFC,⁵² but logistics officers interested in supporting ARSOF are interviewed by only the USASOC G-1. Logistics officers use their personal connections to SOF to aid in the assignment process by seeking a by-name-request from an ARSOF unit. The remainder of the SOF community (Special Forces Officers, all officers serving in the 75th Ranger Regiment, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers and aviation officers for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment) are selected within a close-looped system, or inserted into the system at this juncture if it is their first assignment to ARSOF, and go through an almost completely separate hiring and manning process. Assigning logisticians to Special Forces Groups must be just as selective as for Special Forces officers in order to assign the best logistics officer, based on personality, experience and training (or potential for the latter two), to these critical positions within ARSOF.

It is widely understood among field grade officers of all branches that the majority of battalion commanders are selected to command similar types of battalions in which they served as S-3, XO, or Support Operations Officers.⁵³ Army Human Resources Command currently has the responsibility for

⁵² DeTingo, Geoffrey. 2009. Telephone interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. February 09.

⁵³ DeTingo, Geoffrey. 2009. E-mail to Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. February 09.

this process. For example, one officer interviewed for this monograph was a Forward Support Battalion Executive Officer and Support Operations Officer in a Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT). In the summer of 2009, he will leave his assignment with the 528th SB (A) to command a Brigade Support Battalion in a HBCT.⁵⁴ It logically follows then, that the logistics majors selected for assignment to ARSOF units, and to GSBs in particular should be hand selected and removed from the remainder of the logistics officer pool and thus from assignments to conventional positions. Such a task would simply require closer coordination between the Logistics Branch at Army Human Resources Command and USAFC, with the same dedicated emphasis from the gaining ARSOF units. This is a focus that the 528th SB (A) must maintain henceforth to provide Special Forces Groups the best and most experienced and relevant support.

Interestingly, Special Forces Groups are the only ARSOF units that do not have a selection process for logistics officers and NCOs. The 75th Ranger Regiment has a selection process for all officers, including infantry officers who have already served with the organization; and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment has their selection process called the “green platoon” that logistics and other enabling specialties go through in order to be a part of the unit. It is, therefore, almost unfathomable that Special Forces Groups and the 528th SB (A) would leave their assignment and selection process to the conventional Army system. SF operators and commanders will be more confident in their GSBs knowing that they were selected in light of the Human dimension and in conjunction with the SOF Truths.

One way for the logistics leaders in ARSOF to exude the SOF Truths and fit in their ARSOF organization is to understand where they are “generationally” in the life of their respective GSB. Matt Fuhrer described his concept of generational change in SOF logistics. When the GSBs were established, those in the SOF community, particularly the battalion and group level leaders, did not envision the need to embrace the bolstered logistics presence. Identifying the resistance, Fuhrer realized that his unit’s

⁵⁴ DeTingo, Geoffrey. 2009. Telephone interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. February 09.

acceptance had to come at a lower level. With his group commander's guidance to simply "make it work," he challenged his personnel to work on the human connection and prove the value added of their GSB to the Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alphas (SF Teams), the primary tactical units in SF, which are led by captains and master sergeants. Since team leaders return to the same or a similar organization as majors and eventually lieutenant colonels, particularly as company and battalion commanders, and master sergeants return as sergeants major and command sergeants major of companies and battalions, Fuhrer knew that with adequate support to team level in the initial functions of the GSB, he would produce believers for the future and ultimately sustain SF with competent logistics. Because ARSOF has its own Expeditionary Logistics Imperatives as part of its doctrine, leaders need to be hand selected to fulfill these imperatives. GSBs led by hand-selected and specifically trained officers will also aid in the unit level development of ARSOF logisticians, both company grade officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). The qualifications and development of company grade officers and NCOs is elaborated in the next section on personnel.

One possibility, in addition to a skill identifier (SI), which is covered more in-depth in the section on personnel, is the implementation of ARSOF logistics as a secondary area of concentration (AOC).⁵⁵ DA PAM 600-3 explains the logistics officer AOC, "Officer development will continue to occur through a methodical sequence of progressive assignments in troop units, staff assignments, and institutional training assignments. Self-development continues to be an essential component of officer development. The goal is to develop and sustain logistics officers fully versed in multifunctional logistics and experts in one secondary area of expertise (secondary AOC)."⁵⁶ There are currently nine AOCs for logistics officers. An ARSOF AOC would be an indicator to assignment officers at Department of the

⁵⁵ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*,

⁵⁶ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*,

Army Human Resource Command as well as to ARSOF leaders wanting to assign the right logistics officer to their organizations.

Personnel

It is evident after analyzing all of the tenets of DOTMLPF that the personnel assigned to support ARSOF are filling the gaps in doctrine, organization and training through innovation, adaptation and experimentation. They filled the gaps in doctrine for years by operating without a field manual; they still task organize and tailor their units and deployment packages for the needs of the ARSOF mission and commanders; and they determine their roles and responsibilities, even if they have not been specifically or technically trained for a certain skill set or mission. This level of commitment and ingenuity supports the SOF Truth's emphasis on the human dimension: "*Humans are more important than hardware.*" Yet there are still no additional prerequisite requirements to being assigned to support a Special Forces Group. It is important to distinguish between leadership and personnel, even though some of the processes advocated are similar. Personnel include the leadership, but reference the entire population of a unit, from the lowest ranking private to the commander. Logistics personnel assigned to SOF do not require the exact same training as its leaders, but some additional skills would strongly benefit the organization.

Training the ARSOF logistician has been the topic of many articles and monographs, usually after a major conflict or during transformational movements throughout the Army. These writings normally propose enhancements for the ARSOF logistician, to including initiating a Skill Identifier (SI) for logistics officers assigned to SOF. Before transformation, Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM) had the authority to issue a local ASI for enlisted personnel. This would be added to their official files for consideration of their next assignment. There are requirements for every "operator" in ARSOF, so establishing complimentary requirements for logisticians would not be an extreme stretch. The first requirement would be that logistics personnel volunteer to serve in a Special Forces Group instead of being randomly selected from the Army. Secondly, maturity, capability and potential must be assessed. Finally, relevant psychological and aptitude test scores and physical abilities would give an

order of preference within the closed loop system developed by these requirements. The key to enact this assignment policy is with the support of the leadership interest at the highest levels of USASFC, and commanders of Special Forces Groups and the 528th SB (A).

The 75th Ranger Regiment, another unit in USASOC, currently has a selection process they follow for their logisticians and other low-density MOSs regardless of rank. In line with Army Transformation, the 75th Ranger Regiment enhanced its support units. The battalions of the 75th Ranger Regiment are geographically dispersed in three different locations in the United States, so establishing a regimental Support Battalion would have been counter-productive based on proximity. Instead, each Ranger Battalion received a Support Company and the Regimental Headquarters formed a Regimental Support Operations Detachment (R-SOD). Assignment to any of these support units requires the volunteer to undergo extensive physical and psychological evaluations and, in the case of officers, interview with the Regimental Commander. The interview and selection process allows the Commander to be discerning in who fills the logistics positions and also ascertain potential for further schooling that will aid both the individual and the unit. Along with the 75th Ranger Regiment's selection requirements beyond standard Army Human Resource Command assignment slating for its support personnel, they even advertise within military literature such as the *Army Times* for support personnel to interview for selection into the organization. Once accepted into the Regiment, the opportunity is afforded to all to attend Ranger School. A process similar to the 75th Ranger Regiment's, but modified for the uniqueness of Special Forces Groups, could be used to begin ensuring the human dimension is considered in the assignment of each logistician. Until the process is formalized into policy, it is incumbent upon GSB leadership to inculcate the SOF Truths and develop the human dimension of the Special Forces logisticians under them. Conversations and commentary regarding logisticians assigned to SOF often centers on age and time in service, as both influence the performance of most Soldiers. The first

screening criteria should be that no first term soldiers or officers can be assigned to the SB (SO) (A) or to GSBs. The average age of personnel on Special Forces Teams is 32.⁵⁷ The majority of first-term Soldiers are not mature enough to operate independently without consistent oversight. Additionally, they are not experienced enough to innovate and improvise towards mission success. Soldiers serving in a GSB have to know their military occupational specialty (MOS) in depth, and be able to conduct other MOSs as well. As indicated earlier, GSBs deploy with fewer logistics personnel than is usually optimal for mission requirements. GSB Soldiers therefore must be able to operate with minimal guidance, and possess enough knowledge to complete the mission, not just comprehend their specific MOS. While it may take some time to fully realize the implementation of this policy, it could easily be used as an incentive on each Army installation for young Soldiers and officers. A reward for good performance could lead to support positions in Special Forces Group.⁵⁸ A congressional report highlighting challenges in SOF logistics used re-enlistment trends to show the logisticians' desire to serve in ARSOF. The testimony stated, "Oddly, morale is still high - retention numbers and a host of others metrics prove this to be the case. Officers claim that troops are enduring the brutal pace because they like to fight."⁵⁹ Even ARSOF logisticians are imbuing the SOF Truths, proving that "*Humans are more important than hardware*" and "*Quality is better than quantity*." A Soldier's good performance and the passing of other screening criteria could get him or her to a position of his or her choice. Another recommended criterion is that each assigned Soldier or officer must be a volunteer. Having "double volunteers" (a Soldier

⁵⁷ Captain (retired) Dick Couch, *Proceedings*, "Shore Up SOF," http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_0105_SOF-P1,00.html (accessed 15 November 2008), 1.

⁵⁸ There are numerous reasons logisticians desire to serve in SOF units. Many realize that ARSOF units are really the tip of the spear in the Global War on Terrorism and they feel they are significantly contributing to the nation's defense. They deploy often, but their deployments are template better than some conventional units. Guggisberg mentioned that his Soldiers in 7th GSB were able to plan their calendars a year out because their deployments were predictable. Once Soldiers have served in a conventional unit, many opine that they are treated better, and empowered as "adults" to do their MOS instead of menial or irrelevant administrative tasks.

⁵⁹ U.S. Congress. Senate. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities. *Special Operations Forces: Challenges and Opportunities*, March 3, 2008, 16.

volunteers once to join the Army and then again to serve in ARSOF and conduct the requisite training for that duty) increases esprit-de-corps and raises the level of performance from each individual. Time is required to fully realize the all-volunteer support structure, but the process will ensure the sufficiency of logistics support to Special Forces Groups.

Because there is not currently an interview process to be assigned to a GSB, Fuhrer feels that the GSBs (and therefore the Special Force Groups) are still in a position to grow their own Special Forces logisticians, ensuring that the proper and sufficient training is given to each.⁶⁰ In growing their own Special Forces logisticians, the GSBs train their personnel not only in their original MOS, but also in other MOSs within the battalion. Extensive cross training at the GSB broadens the capabilities of the battalion, but also ties up personnel and resources conducting additional training. Establishing policies for the retention of these logisticians will solidify the process for providing qualified logisticians. Of great importance is the willingness of ARSOF commanders to eliminate underperformers. The key is establishing criteria to monitor requirements, and the demonstrated ability of individual personnel to perform logistics duties. After successfully completing an ARSOF assignment, logistics officers and NCOs can be allowed opportunities to continue in SOF or allowed to pursue other career objectives.

Another way to ensure the right personnel are assigned to Special Forces Groups would be to initiate a form of advertising campaign to find civilians with specific logistics capabilities required by Special Forces. Among the unemployed and underemployed civilian population, abundant in today's economy, there are likely many people with the unique skills and capabilities needed to fill ARSOF support units. Guaranteeing them a job in Special Forces may secure enlistments or commissions for the future. One way to approach this concept would be by reverse engineering the Army Vocational/Technical (AVOTEC) Soldier program. The Army Vocational/Technical (AVOTEC) Soldier

⁶⁰ Matthew Fuhrer. 2009. Interview by Jason Alvis. Fort Leavenworth, KS. January 09.

Program is designed to provide training in high-demand career fields identified by the Department of Labor.⁶¹ The majority of the list contains high-demand/low-density MOS skills that ARSOF logistics requires, to include wholesale trade, real estate leasing, transportation and warehousing and truck transportation.⁶² Instead of providing training for high-demand jobs in the civilian market, these programs could identify qualified personnel for the Special Forces logistics high-demand/low-density jobs like property book manager and supply operations. As indicated earlier, the 75th Ranger Regiment advertises within military publications for high-demand/low-density MOSs. Taken a step further, Special Forces could advertise elsewhere and acquire personnel with the appropriate Human dimension.

Throughout the entire process, individuals should be assessed for how they fit within the organization. The personal fit of the logistician must be right for the organization. A “fit” can only be ascertained through an interviewing and screening process and by placing limitations and constraints as listed above, and by deliberately hiring from the civilian sector those who currently possess skills required for ARSOF logistics. All of these recommendations are in line with the second and third SOF Truths, *“Quality is better than quantity”* and *“Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced.”*

Facilities

Facilities for ARSOF have not traditionally been an issue. Only recently have they become problematic for two reasons. The first is the expansion of each Special Forces Group by two battalions (the GSB and a fourth SF battalion) within a five year period. Although not directly impacting the Human dimension, supporting four battalions of special operators with the personnel and facilities constructed for three battalions creates logistics shortfalls that the ARSOF logistician will have to overcome when supporting the SFG’s training and garrison operations. The second, and more pressing

⁶¹ (Army Times April 6 2009)

⁶² Ibid

issue is the significant ARSOF logistics challenge in Iraq as conventional forces draw down, yet ARSOF remains to conduct Foreign Internal Defense, among other missions. The fifth SOF Truth that *Most Special Operations require non-SOF support* will be realized if ARSOF is in want of support after the conventional Army's drawdown in Iraq. LTC (R) Carstens addressed this in his testimony to Congress. He relayed concerns of the senior SOF commander in Iraq: "When asked what keeps him awake at night, the CJSOTF Commander replied, 'logistics when Big Army leaves and we eventually draw down forces from Iraq.'"⁶³ The drawdown in Iraq will affect facilities as ARSOF may have to travel further to get supplies or coordinate with higher or adjacent headquarters. ARSOF may also have to provide for their own protection whereas other units currently offer base security. Upon the departure of conventional forces, SOF, including the logisticians, will be left to manage the facilities and the missions that have been vacated. It is highly likely that the link to any remaining conventional forces and Iraq will be the ARSOF logistician. An ARSOF logistician that knows and understands the SOF Truths, particularly the forgotten truth that *Most Special Operations require non-SOF support* will be best suited to support ARSOF during this increased mission load.

As previously articulated, ARSOF support is structured to reduce redundancy, sustain for a limited amount of time in austere conditions, and then tie into theater-level support. ARSOF will need a robust contracting or coordination cell with the Iraqi Security Forces and local civilian contracting agencies in order to continue operating after conventional forces depart the area of operations. Establishing and maintaining these contracts and links to the host nation will likely fall on the ARSOF logistician. This strongly reinforces the need selection criteria developed in light of the SOF Truths in order to sustain ARSOF in Iraq.

⁶³ U.S. Congress. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities. *Special Operations Forces: Challenges and Opportunities*, March 3, 2008, 16

Conclusion and Recommendations

The transformation of ARSOF logistics was not initially designed to support the Long War. A delay in writing doctrine and a very limited circulation of interim logistics doctrine is the first preventable shortcoming that could have been better executed. Closely connected to leadership and selection criteria, appropriate training is important to sustain ARSOF through the Long War. As ARSOF transformation continues, specifically in its support units, the size and organization of the unit must be complimented by the appropriate personnel to manage and lead change. Without an emphasis on the human dimension in manning ARSOF logistics units, the transformational changes to ARSOF will be incomplete. Additionally, the fifth SOF Truth should be restored and serve as the basis to apply the SOF Truths to ARSOF logisticians and integrate them into ARSOF.

By working within cycles and transformation bands, ARSOF logisticians can continue to adequately support ARSOF and be at the forefront of Army logistics transformation initiatives, particularly by leveraging their unique position in regards to funding through SOF-peculiar and regular Army channels. At the forefront of Army logistics transformation, ARSOF logisticians could also initiate the development joint doctrine and training methodologies for SOF logistics.

The consistent reevaluation of the tenets of the DOTMLPF in light of the SOF Truths and a constant focus on the human dimension is the only way for SOF to be adequately supported in the COE and the FOE. In this re-assessment process, USASOC and ARSOF logisticians must focus on Doctrine, Leadership, Personnel and Training. Doctrine and FM 3-05.140 specifically, should be disseminated among ARSOF logistics personnel for revisions and updates. The dissemination will include ARSOF logisticians as a portion of the human dimension within the SOF Truths. An ARSOF logistics course at ALMC would better prepare company grade ARSOF logistics officers for their unique combination of conventional logistics systems and SOF-unique requirements and expectations. The SOF Studies curriculum at the USACGSC should be developed with the addition of advanced SOF logistics for field grade officer. Leveraging the ARSOF logistics knowledge from the DLRO instructors would prepare the logistician for an assignment in ARSOF. The leaders of the GSBs should volunteer and then be

interviewed, assessed and selected into a closed-looped assignment system for ARSOF. Additionally, the personnel of the GSBs should be recruited, assessed and deliberately chosen for their positions. These are the vital pillars of the DOTMLPF, according to FM 1.⁶⁴ By focusing on these four pillars, ARSOF logistics will fulfill the SOF Truths, and will provide the unique and complex logistics support that ARSOF expects and requires.

This monograph proved the need to apply the SOF Truths to Special Forces logistics. Fortunately, many of the recommendations made here are already in existence within the Army or the DoD. The adjustments can be accomplished with minimal cost to the Army or ARSOF. The solutions are based on existing resources that only require tailoring current curriculum and courses. Because there are officers willing to serve in these demanding positions, and because they require a broader base of knowledge and expertise than the conventional logistician, the small investment of sending the right person to current Army or DoD courses will improve ARSOF logistics transformation and positively affect USASOC with little monetary cost, but with immense investment in the human dimension through the SOF Truths.

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of the Army. Field Manual 1, *The Army*, 1-67 – 1-80.

APPENDIX – ACRONYMS

ALE: Army Logistics Element
ALMC: Army Logistics Management College
AOC: Area of Concentration
ARSOF: Army Special Operations Forces
ASI: Additional Skill Identifier
AVOTEC: Army Vocational/Technical Soldier Program
CENTCOM: Central Command
CGSC: Command and General Staff College
DoD: Department of Defense
DOTD: Directorate of Training and Doctrine
DOTMLPF: Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities
DLRO: Department of Logistics and Resource Readiness
EUCOM: European Command
FM: Field Manual
FMI: Field Manual Interim
GSB: Group Support Battalion
GWOT: Global War on Terror
HBCT: Heavy Brigade Combat Team
ILE: Intermediate Level Education
MOS: Military Occupational Specialty
MTOE: Modified Table of Organization and Equipment
OPME: Officer Professional Military Education
R-SOD: Ranger Support Operations Detachment
SOCEUR: Special Operations Command Europe
SOF: Special Operations Forces
SOTF: Special Operations Task Force
SOTSE: Special Operations Theater Support Element
SOSCOM: Special Operations Support Command
TSOC: Theater Special Operations Command
UAV: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
USAJFKSWCS: United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
USASFC: United States Special Forces Command
USASOC: United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM: United States Special Operations Command

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